

Senate Regulatory Reform Committee
Testimony of Birgit McQuiston, RN, BSN, CN
Thursday, June 5, 2014

Honorable members of the Senate Regulatory Reform Committee -- Good afternoon. My name is Birgit McQuiston, and I live in Lake Orion, Michigan where I serve on the Board of Education. I am here today to first of all thank the Senate Regulatory Reform Committee for holding a hearing on HB 4688, and also to implore you to vote YES on this bill. I have a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing degree, am a Registered Nurse, and after two years of additional studies in nutrition, have earned the status of Certified Nutritionist (TM). I chose intentionally NOT to become a Registered Dietitian because the curriculum and studies were not the direction I wanted to go in as I knew it was not designed to have an impact on optimal health and disease prevention. Nutrition and the influence it has on health is my passion, and I desire to share my knowledge with those that would seek it from me. The enactment of PA 333 of 2006 would prohibit me from doing so, and thus, **I implore you to vote yes on HB 4688.**

In their lobbying efforts for the rights of non-Registered Dietitians, The National Health Federation wrote: "Twenty years before he became the 4th president of the United States, James Madison successfully insisted the Ninth Amendment be added to the Bill of Rights. The first eight Amendments had started to enumerate a long list of rights. How many were there -- 100? 1,000? Millions? Was it necessary for Congress to enumerate every natural, God-given right before the states could be asked to ratify the Constitution?

Madison wrote the Ninth Amendment so we, in our generation, could enumerate, then exercise those rights we, the people, have retained. The right to choose our own nutritionist is one of those rights.

*In only 21 words, the Ninth Amendment says:
"The enumeration in the Constitution, of
certain rights, shall not be construed to deny
or disparage others retained by the people."*

When Madison carefully crafted the language of the Ninth Amendment, he had never even heard of a dietitian and [Michigan] was not yet a state. For some time we have been working on the concept that if the First Amendment gives us the right to choose our own priest or preacher, the Ninth Amendment certainly must give us the right to choose our own doctor and nutritionist.

It was Madison's view that the primary value of a bill of rights was its capacity to instill the precepts of a free society in the community at large and the possibility that it would act as a moral check upon those in authority."

I do not presume to take anything away from Registered Dietitians, and I wish them all the best as they seek to round out their own profession. However, today there is a demand for holistic health care, like never before, and many Registered Dietitians are not qualified to fill that role. Consumers have a right to choose their nutritional advisors. Please vote YES on HB 4688.